

The Island Creek Fish Ladders Are the County's Oldest

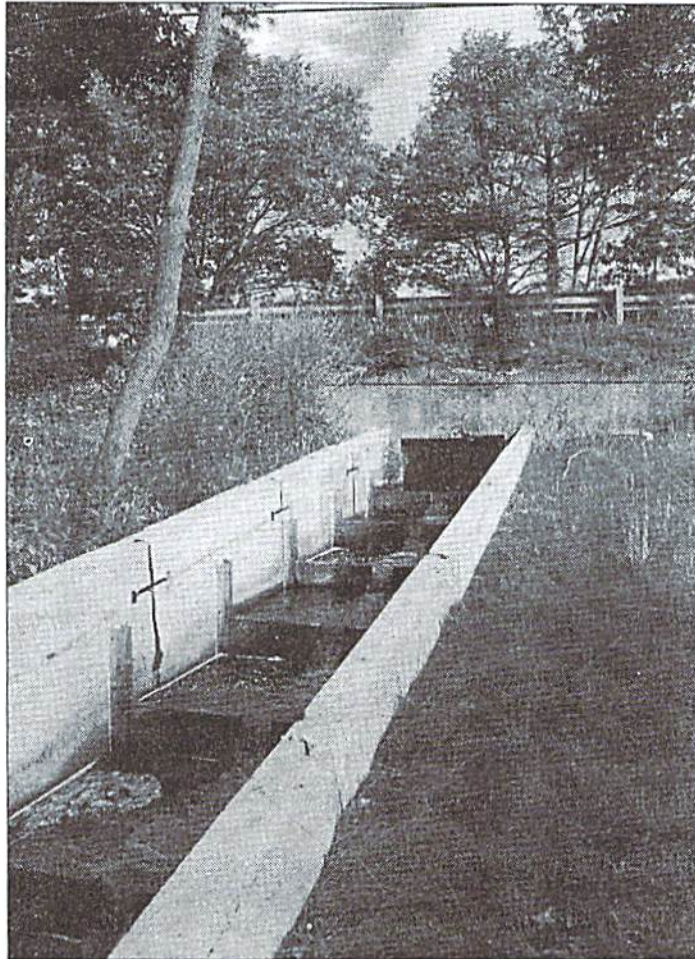
By JOHN BEAR

Island Creek is both the newest and the oldest fish ladder system in Plymouth County and was completely rebuilt in 2006. The ladders enable certain species of Herring and Smelt to use the creek to spawn in the Ice Pond and Island Creek Pond, and migrate to Kingston Bay and the ocean waters.

These fish are a key part of the food chain for larger ocean fish, and are protected from netting and fishing. One of the ladders is east of Tremont Street at the end of the culvert from the Ice Pond, and the other is near Island Creek Pond and Elm Street. The system is a low-flow design, so there is water for the fish to swim in and jump, even in relatively dry periods. There is more information about the ladders at the kiosk in the Island Creek parking area.

The original ladders were built in 1702, and they were repaired and rebuilt over the years, but reached such a point of deterioration that they were not usable. The Duxbury Bay Commission decided to address the problem in 2002, and with some help from our own Conservation Department, the state Marine Fisheries department and a consultant, recommended a design for a rebuilt system.

Town Meeting approved the Community Preservation Act expenditure in 2004, and



The Island Creek fish ladders were rebuilt in 2006 using Community Preservation Act money.

the ladders were rebuilt and reopened in 2006. The total project cost was \$206,000, with \$53,000 from local CPC taxes, \$53,000 from State matching and \$100,000 from other sources, primarily grants. The state now stocks Island Creek Pond with Blueback Herring in the Spring and some will travel down the lad-

ders to the ocean, then return 4-5 years later to spawn. This was a unique opportunity to apply the town's CPC funding capability to a historic conservation project.

This article is part of an occasional series highlighting the various Community Preservation Act projects around town. — Ed.